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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are presented to help school districts plan and implement effective education programs for preschool handicapped children. It is explained that the document was developed from the experiences of special education staff of the Texas Education Agency and early childhood consultants, and that the guidelines and recommendations are not designed as rules for program compliance. Topics covered include (sample subtopics in parentheses): eligibility; administrative management (administrator role, staff certification); personnel (attitudes and competencies); personnel development (transdisciplinary approach); procedural safeguards (district policies); child identification (public awareness activities); individual assessment (district wide screening programs); individual educational plan (IEP) development (components of the IEP); educational program placement (combination of instructional options); individualized instruction; related services (eligibility); and IEP review (procedures for 3-month and 3-year reviews). Additional topics include curriculum, building facilities, materials and equipment, parent involvement, service coordination, and program evaluation. (CL)

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PROGRAM

Guidelines and Recommendations

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Early Childhood Education for the Handicapped

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Texas Education Agency
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FOREWORD

The Guidelines and Recommendations for an Early Childhood Program for the Handicapped was developed and reviewed by special education staff of the Texas Education Agency and early childhood consultants from the regional education service centers.

The document was developed over the past year based on the needs of school districts for components necessary to implement a comprehensive early childhood program.

While these guidelines and recommendations are not designed as policies or rules for program compliance, they will help school districts plan and implement effective education programs for preschool handicapped children.

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Commissioner of Education

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COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.

GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM FOR THE HANDICAPPED

PURPOSE

The purpose of Guidelines and Recommendations for an Early Childhood Program for the Handicapped, as stated in the foreword, is to help school districts plan and implement effective education programs for preschool handicapped children. This document may be used to provide structure for the pre-planning stages of new program development, assist in the evaluation of existing programs, and/or determine program needs and priority areas for program expansion.

The recommended set of guidelines represent procedures and principles for delivery of early childhood services but do not serve as policies or rules for program compliance. Program and policy compliance are based on the Texas Education Agency Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students and Evaluation of Early Childhood Programs.

Definition of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education programs for preschool handicapped children ages 0-5 provide instructional and related services to eligible children based on individual needs. They are identified during the appraisal and admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) processes.

Eligibility

Eligibility for special education services is determined by the presence of one or more handicapping condition(s) as defined in Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students. The specific handicapping condition(s) identified by the ARD committee provides the student

eligibility classification. Service is made available through the district's early childhood program.

The Texas Education Code, Section 16.104, titled Comprehensive Special Education Program for Handicapped Children and the Agency publication titled Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students state that a free and appropriate public education is available to all handicapped students who are between the ages of three and twenty-one and to auditorially or visually handicapped persons between birth and twenty-one, inclusive.

Any handicapped child who has reached his/her third birthday on or before September 1 may be legally admitted to the early childhood program and counted as eligible for attendance purposes. Any child who has not attained the age of three on or before September 1 of the current school year and yet receives services as a handicapped student is reported in the category of "ineligible" (meaning ineligible for public schools to receive state funds and ineligible to be counted for average daily attendance purposes) on the Superintendent's Annual Report. However, an auditorially or visually handicapped child less than three years of age may be served by the early childhood program or other instructional arrangements as determined by the ARD committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Administrative support and management are essential to an early childhood program. The school district's administrative responsibilities include such areas as the development of program philosophy, program and financial management, personnel selection and management, compliance with federal and state regulations, and program evaluation.

GOAL

The school provides a management system for the early childhood program.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.71.030, page 6; Section 35.72, pages 11-46; Section 35.73.023, pages 55, 60; Section 35.73.070, pages 114-121; Section 35.74.060, page 104; Section 35.75.040, page 108; Section 35.75.060, pages 113-114; and Section 41.21.080, pages 143-144.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Districts should have written early childhood program goals and objectives consistent with the needs of preschool handicapped children and with federal and state policies and procedures.
2. Early childhood priorities and special issues should be addressed by an advisory committee, which may be the district's special education advisory committee or a separately appointed group.
3. It is the program administrator's responsibility to maintain the early childhood program. The administrator should maintain communication

with the Texas Education Agency regarding currently available funding sources.

4. The appropriate program administrator should establish a reasonable budget which will allow the implementation of the individual educational plan developed for each child. Financial management is governed by regulations established in Bulletin 679, Financial Accounting Manual. All allowable expenditures must be documented, based upon the requirements of the individual funding sources.
5. Documentation of dual enrollment is required for an early childhood student who is receiving services from two agencies and meets the eligibility criteria of both. Public school funding for special education is based on student's eligibility for special education services, the length of time for which special education services are provided, and dual enrollment.
6. If a student receives four hours of instruction per day, the district may count the student for full-time ADA and for the 94-142 count. If the child receives two hours of instruction per day, he/she may be counted for half-time ADA and for the 94-142 count. If a student receives less than two hours of instruction or related services per day, he/she can be counted only for federal funds (December 1, 94-142 Child Count). If a student has been identified as hearing impaired and attends the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf 50% or more of the day, the student is ineligible to be counted for ADA. A student who attends the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf less than 50% of the day is counted for ADA.
7. Early childhood personnel should have access to state and federal policies, procedures, and regulations regarding special education.

A system should be established to ensure that current changes in regulations are disseminated to early childhood personnel who may be directly affected by such changes.

8. A program for young handicapped children should have available special education support personnel from the local school district and the regional education service center. Their responsibility is to provide support to personnel providing direct instruction to students so that they in turn can provide the children with more effective services. It is very important that the support personnel maintain open communication with instructional personnel. Should conflicts arise, a system of due process is available to the involved parties.
9. Teachers serving children in the early childhood program must have special education certification or endorsement. Documentation regarding teacher qualifications and certification must be maintained by the appropriate program administrator. Annual personnel evaluations should also be conducted and documented by the appropriate administrator (See Personnel Section).
10. It is the administrator's responsibility to provide inservice training and personnel development activities which are related to the specific needs of the early childhood education personnel. Attendance at all inservice training should be documented. A system of compensation and/or credit for personnel participating in such activities is desirable (See Personnel Development Section).
11. Districts should make provisions to ensure that adherence to procedural safeguards for protection of the rights of parents and students are established and implemented (See Procedural Safeguards Section).

12. All special education policies and procedures for handicapped children involving identification, screening and assessment, and programming must be followed for eligible students. Required documentation including referral committee report, ARD/IEP records, and other records specified in Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students must be maintained in the child's eligibility folder (See Child-Centered Educational Process Sections).

13. Diagnostic, therapeutic, and instructional services provided to handicapped children in an early childhood program should reflect coordination between public schools and community agencies when appropriate. Written agreements should be maintained to document these cooperative efforts (See Service Coordination Section).

14. An annual program evaluation should be conducted and documented by the special education director (See Evaluation Section).

PERSONNEL

INTRODUCTION

Personnel working with early childhood programs should have demonstrated competencies and skills that enable them to work with young handicapped children.

GOAL

The school selects appropriate personnel for an early childhood program.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.73.023(A)(i)(iii).

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Professional and paraprofessional early childhood personnel should demonstrate the following attitudes and competencies:
   a. Interest in and a commitment to working with young handicapped children and their parents.
   b. Knowledge of normal child growth and development.
2. Professional personnel should also demonstrate the following competencies:
   a. Knowledge of handicapping conditions as defined in Policies and Administrative Procedures and their effects on normal growth and development.
   b. Knowledge of early cognitive development.
   c. Knowledge of normal speech and language development.
   d. Knowledge of educational curriculum for young children.
   e. Ability to adapt curriculum to meet the needs of children with various handicapping conditions.

f. Skills necessary to work as a team member to identify, evaluate, and plan for young handicapped children.

g. Knowledge of techniques and procedures for screening and assessing preschool children.

h. Knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement an appropriate individual educational plan for a child based on the complete assessment information.

i. Communication skills and knowledge of techniques and materials in order to provide training to parents of handicapped young children.

3. Teachers holding special education certificates or endorsements may be assigned to any level of a basic special education instructional program serving students ages three through twenty-one. Teachers holding only a special education endorsement for Early Childhood Education for Handicapped Children may be assigned only to programs serving three-, four-, five-, and six-year-old students.

4. An important role of the teacher aide is to enhance the special education instructional program for handicapped children. Upon annual approval by the Texas Education Agency, an Aide III may be assigned for instructional purposes to an early childhood class if supervised by a certified special education teacher who works with the aide on a scheduled basis of at least one hour per day or five hours per week.

5. The special education supervisor is to provide leadership in the instructional program, including coordination, appraisal, and instruction.

6. The related services personnel implements services for the handicapped child as identified in his/her Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The personnel must meet certification requirements as described in Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142) states that a comprehensive system of personnel development must be a component of the state's special education plan. Personnel preparation should be viewed as an ongoing process of professional development in a continuum ranging from inservice training for beginners to sophisticated training for experienced personnel.

GOAL

The school establishes and maintains an ongoing comprehensive system of personnel development that addresses identified training needs of persons working in early childhood education.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.75.040, pages 106-108.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Personnel development programs should be designed to further train individuals who work with early childhood children and their parents. This includes teachers, paraprofessional personnel, support personnel, and administrators.
2. Personnel development programs should be based on individual's present levels of needs, knowledge, and training as determined by systematic procedures of needs identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

3. A transdisciplinary approach should be the basis of training due to the unique combination of skills required of early childhood personnel. Program activities may be provided by local district staff, regional education service center consultants, contracted consultants, or by sessions hosted by colleges, universities, or professional organizations.
4. An effective evaluation procedure involving participants should be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the inservice training program. This evaluation should then be used to plan procedures and activities for future personnel development programs.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

INTRODUCTION

Procedural safeguards have been established to preserve the rights of handicapped students and their parents in the pursuit of equal opportunity in public education programs.

GOAL

The school provides assurances for maintenance of procedural safeguards for the protection of student and parent rights.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.75.070, pages 114-121.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. All procedural safeguards addressed in Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students must be afforded each eligible early childhood student and his/her parent(s). These safeguards include:
   a. Confidentiality of records
   b. Notice
   c. Consent
   d. Educational placement
   e. Procedural due process
   f. Surrogate parents
   g. Complaint procedures

2. District policies must be established to ensure maintenance of procedural safeguards that are consistent with federal and state regulations as listed in the preceding statement.

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

CHILD IDENTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

The preschool years are generally considered the most important years for learning to occur. Early detection and intervention is especially important because it increases the likelihood that these children may later function without the need for special education. Identification of preschool handicapped children is a mutually shared activity of federal, state, and local agencies, with the local education agency having the final responsibility.

The Child-Centered Educational Process is a continuum of special education services provided directly to a handicapped student. The first stage, Child Identification, includes the following components: Public Awareness, Direction Service, and Referral Process.

GOAL

The school identifies handicapped children as early as possible and begins the process of placing such children in appropriate intervention programs.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.020, pages 11-14.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Each school district should conduct Public Awareness activities to increase the level of awareness of the general public and agencies concerning:
   a. The importance of early intervention.
   b. Early warning signs that indicate a child may have a learning problem and should be referred.
   c. The availability of existing public school programs.

2. Regional and statewide Direction Service systems include a procedure for processing and following through on each referral and a data bank of resources available to serve handicapped students and their families. Each school district should have written procedures for utilizing the regional and state Direction Service systems.

3. A child may be referred for consideration for special education services by the parents, physicians, community agencies, other appropriate individuals, school personnel, or as a result of a district-wide screening program. The Referral Process for a child involves:

   a. the assigning by the appropriate administrator of an educational liaison who has experience with early childhood students,

   b. the collection of appropriate data concerning the child, and

   c. the function of a referral committee to determine possible educational alternatives for the child.

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Evaluating a very young child is a unique task which requires special skills and techniques in observation, in relating to children and parents, and in interpreting results of tests which were not originally designed for very young children. The assessment instrument(s) should be appropriate to the child's level of functioning and type of suspected handicapping condition.

Assessment data and interpretation are used to determine the child's eligibility for special services and as a description of present levels of functioning for guiding the IEP development of eligible children. Sometimes the young age or nature of the handicapping condition of a child render it impossible to obtain definitive data within the required time lines, although the data may be sufficient for the ARD committee to determine an appropriate placement for the child. In these cases, more complete information should be obtained and related to the ARD committee when further assessment is appropriate. Consequently, the assessment process should be viewed as an ongoing rather than as a static or one-time-only event.

GOAL

The school provides an appropriate individual assessment for each child referred to determine his/her needs for special education intervention.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.030, pages 14-31.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Local districts may choose to conduct a district-wide screening program as one means of identifying children ages 3-5 who may be eligible for special education services in an early childhood program. The district plans and develops the screening program, including making physical arrangements, scheduling the event, obtaining personnel needed, and selecting screening instruments to be used.
2. Teachers, educational diagnosticians, psychologists, or other trained personnel may be involved in administering appropriate screening and/or assessment instruments.
3. Screening is not considered a complete comprehensive assessment. The information collected during screening will be a determining factor whether or not a comprehensive assessment is needed.
4. There are three stages of the individual assessment process:

   Stage I A determination of physical, mental, and/or emotional conditions;

   Stage II: A determination of educational performance levels; and

   Stage III: The identification of specific competencies and recommended instructional and related services needed.
5. Assessment personnel should use professional judgment in the selection of assessment instruments/techniques for Stages I, II, and III. A resource for identifying appropriate assessment tools is Annotations of Early Childhood Instruments (REI 875 02).
6. Norm-referenced instruments selected should have validity and reliability for early childhood students. Criterion-referenced instruments or techniques may include observation, parent interviews, developmental scales, and commercial and/or teacher-made tests.

7. Assessment of young children may deviate from established procedures provided the rationale for the departure as well as the results of the assessment are documented by the professional conducting the assessment.
8. Outside consultants may be necessary when assessing young severely handicapped students.
9. Data collected from observations, parent interviews, and test results should be included in the written assessment report.

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

All decisions regarding the educational program of a child referred for special education consideration are to be made by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. The membership of the ARD committee for an early childhood student must include representatives from the areas of administration, instruction, and assessment (including at least one representative of special education), the designated educational liaison; and the student's designated parent representative.* A speech therapist or occupational therapist may serve on the ARD committee and represent the area of assessment.

The ARD committee determines and documents that the child meets the eligibility criteria for one or more handicapping conditions and needs special education. An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is then developed by the ARD committee for the child. The IEP is a written plan which guides the provision of special education and related services appropriate for the child.

GOAL

The school develops an Individual Educational Plan for each eligible special education student.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.040, pages 31-39.

*In the case of children with hearing or visual impairments, a certified teacher of the deaf or blind must be on the ARD committee.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The assessment data collected will be the basis for planning the appropriate educational program, including needed related services, as specified in the IEP. The appropriate placement is determined by the ARD committee as the IEP is developed.
2. The IEP must include:
   a. Present competencies
   b. Statement of annual goals and short-term objectives
   c. Statement of services to be provided accompanied by designation of person responsible for implementing each activity
   d. Amount of time in each setting with projected dates for initiation of services, anticipated duration of services, and justification for the provision of each service
   e. Schedules and criteria for evaluation of each objective
   f. Signatures and position of all ARD committee members and an indication of each member's consent or dissent with the decisions
   g. For hearing impaired students or visually handicapped students the IEP must contain:
      (1) a summary of the views of the parent concerning goals and objectives and the special services being provided;
      (2) an outline of the obligations undertaken by the student's family in connection with the individual educational plan;
      (3) a detailed description of the arrangements made to provide the student with training to compensate for hearing or visual loss and access to special media and equipment or devices commonly utilized by students with serious hearing or visual loss;

(4) plans and arrangements made for contacts with and continuing services to the student during periods in which the student might not be involved in school programs; and

(5) assurances that the parent:

(a) has been provided a detailed explanation of the various service resources available within the community and throughout the state and

(b) has been informed of rights and procedural safeguards (also see policy 35.75.070, Procedural Safeguards).

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The selection of the most appropriate instructional setting for a young handicapped child must be based on the individual child's needs. The setting should be one in which the child's needs for special education and related services can be met and in which the child can be integrated to the maximum extent appropriate with nonhandicapped children. Removal of the handicapped child from the regular education environment, in particular for 5 year olds, should occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

GOAL

The school educates each handicapped child in the instructional setting which constitutes the "least restrictive environment" for his or her growth and development.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.040, pages 39-40; and Section 35.73.021, pages 48-51.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The ARD committee determines a child's eligibility as handicapped and need for special education services. Once these have been determined, the ARD committee recommends an appropriate program placement and the length of time a student should receive the needed services. The educational program must be the least restrictive environment for that child.

2. Early childhood students may be served in any combination of the following instructional options:

   a. Itinerant

   b. Resource/Team Teaching

   c. Homeroom/Special Education Departmentalized

   d. Classes for Severely Handicapped

   e. Community Class/Residential Supplemental Unit Class/Hospital Class

   f. Homebound/Hospital Bedside Instruction

   g. Other instructional options (such as a home-based program in which an itinerant teacher and/or a specially trained aide, under supervision of teacher, provide instructional services and related services to the child and supportive services to parents

   h. Regular classroom

3. A child placed in special education may receive instructional and/or related services and should be enrolled and placed on the special education register. If a student receives special education services for a speech handicap only, these services will be classified as instruction. If a student receives special education instruction and also receives services for a speech handicap, the speech services will be classified as related services.

4. Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students states that each handicapped student will have available a six-hour instructional day. It is the responsibility of the ARD committee to determine the length of the instructional day for each handicapped student based on his/her individual needs as reflected in the IEP.

5. The number of children and the staffing pattern in an early childhood class for the handicapped is determined at the local level. Some factors that need to be considered in determining the number of children in a class and the teacher/child ratio are:

a. Types of handicapping conditions

b. Severity of handicapping conditions

c. Number of professionals and paraprofessionals available

d. Size of the room

e. Types of instructional activities to be provided as per the student's IEP

Each child has unique learning needs; the instructional program should be designed to meet these needs.

6. The number of handicapped students and the staffing pattern for early childhood students served in a "non-class" setting may be determined by considering the following factors:

a. Types of handicapping conditions

b. Severity of handicapping conditions

c. IEP requirements

d. Geographic scatter

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Individualizing the instructional program is particularly important in early childhood because of the wide range of variability in the time of appearance and the rate of development of various skills in young children. The instructional program should reflect the basic needs of the young child as well as his/her special needs as stated in the IEP.

GOAL

The school provides individualized special education instruction to pre-school handicapped students.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.050, page 40

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Individualized instruction for each handicapped child consists of the following elements:
   a. Specific instructional objectives based on the child's needs as stated in the IEP;
   b. Learning activities appropriate to the child's learning style and presented specifically and sequentially as needed for the child to progress toward the attainment of each instructional objective;
   c. Instructional media and materials selected on the basis of the child's learning style;
   d. An instructional setting which provides multiple arrangements for learning;

e. A schedule showing teaching personnel time that assures instruction to each child in individual or group arrangements; and

f. Procedures by which the teaching personnel measure, record, and report each child's progress.

2. The individualized instructional program for each child must be documented.

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

RELATED SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Meeting the special education needs of an individual handicapped child may require providing related services. These services are developmental, corrective, supportive, or evaluative in nature. Such services are provided in order for the student to benefit from the instructional program and to fulfill the requirements of the student's individual educational plan. Related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, etc., may be provided when there is no immediate instructional need; but the services must have educational implications.

GOAL

The school provides related services which are appropriate in meeting the needs of each eligible special education student as identified in the IEP.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.060, pages 41-42

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Eligibility of a special education student for any one of the related services will be determined by the ARD committee based on:
   a. a written report or evaluation from registered, certified, or licensed related services personnel identifying the student's problems and the degree of severity as might affect the student's ability to benefit from instruction;

b. evidence in the individual educational plan that any and all related services to be received by a special education student are integrated into the total individual educational plan for the student; and

c. medical referral for a specific related service (when such is required by the discipline and/or personnel to be providing the related service).

2. The individual educational plan should reflect the following: related service needed, who will provide the service, how long the service will be provided, how the service will be evaluated, and the anticipated benefit to the student.

3. A school district may provide related services to an identified handicapped student who is receiving services from another program such as Headstart, a private school, etc.

4. If a district is providing a child who is attending another facility with related services only, the child may be counted for federal funds (December 1, 94-142 Child Count).

CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To ensure continuity of services and provide adequate time to prepare for the child's future educational placement, each school district must establish a system for reviewing each handicapped student's progress based on the objectives stated in the student's individual educational plan.

GOAL

The school reviews each student's individual educational plan to determine the student's progress, the need for modifying the plan, and the student's continued need for special education services.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.070, pages 42-44

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. According to Policies and Administrative Procedure 35.72.070, the individual educational plan should be reviewed as follows:

   a. Three-Month Review

      Each agency will establish procedures and assign personnel responsibilities, usually a teacher, for conducting, at least every three months after initial placement in special education, an informal review of each handicapped student's progress according to objectives identified in the individual educational plan.

b. Annual Review

(1) The admission, review, and dismissal committee must review at least annually each handicapped student's progress according to the goals and objectives as stated in the individual educational plan. Criteria and estimated time lines for dismissal from special education and return to regular education are developed by the admission, review, and dismissal committee for each student no later than at the first annual review of the individual educational plan.

(2) Decisions concerning changes in a student's placement are made when the ARD committee determines in its review that a different placement is needed or that the student is no longer in need of special education services and should be dismissed from the program to the regular kindergarten or first grade.

c. Three-Year Review

At least once every three years on or before the anniversary date of the student's initial placement in special education, the admission, review, and dismissal committee shall base its review decisions on new individual assessment information. The professionals responsible for assessing each general area of the student's functioning and for determining the handicapping condition shall then determine and document the degree to which new assessment in each area is necessary. The admission, review, and dismissal committee may request additional information in any area.

CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

The early childhood program should use an overall curriculum which addresses the needs of the children in the five areas of cognition, motor development, language, socialization, and self-help skills. The curriculum, whether commercial, a combination of several curricula, or project-developed, should be directly related to the assessment procedures, be developmentally sequenced, and provide the teachers with information about how to teach the above listed behaviors. The criteria by which one can judge the effectiveness of a curriculum and the instructional strategies are twofold: (1) the content of what is taught should be developmentally relevant to the life functioning of the individual, and (2) any approach which can be demonstrated objectively to have resulted in the attainment of individual skills and does not infringe upon the rights of the child is to be preferred. (The companion document, Curriculum for Early Childhood Programs, gives more specific information for planning purposes.)

GOAL

The school provides a comprehensive program of instruction to meet the individual needs of handicapped young children.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.73.021, page 48

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Each child, regardless of the handicapping condition, should be assisted in developing skills in the five areas previously cited that are considered necessary for the child to function as independently as possible.

2. The curriculum should emphasize individual worth, self esteem, and individual styles of learning.
3. Curriculum materials and activities should be motivating, self-rewarding, and facilitate the generalization of learned skills in a variety of settings.

BUILDING FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The physical environment in which the young child is taught is a critical component of his learning; a well-designed and organized classroom facilitates learning for the handicapped child.

GOAL

The school ensures that the school environment facilitates child growth and development.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.73.025, page 70

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Facilities for early childhood handicapped students must be comparable to those for students in regular education programs.
2. The early childhood classroom should be located near other programs for young children.
3. Facilities for early childhood programs should be barrier-free and appropriate for small children.
4. Facilities for young children should have easy access to restrooms.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The materials and equipment used with young handicapped children should be correlated to their unique needs. These needs are determined by the assessment information and addressed by the individual educational plan for each child. Safety factors and size of equipment should also be prime considerations.

GOAL

The school provides materials and equipment which will maximally facilitate the developmental progress of each student.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.72.050, page 40; and Section 35.73.022, page 52

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The development and use of effective teacher-made materials should be encouraged.
2. Districts may utilize materials and equipment available for checkout from the local Special Education Resource System (SERS) and the Special Education Instructional Materials Center (SEIMC) within the regional education service center.
3. Adaptive equipment should be provided when needed in order for a student to benefit from the instructional program and to fulfill the requirements of the student's individual educational plan.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Parent participation is vital to a successful early childhood program in that it forms the basis for home carry-over and continuity in the child's education. The parents' understanding of the school environment is as important as the teacher's understanding of the home environment. Parents need to know what they can expect from the educational program, how it differs from day care, and how they can participate in the goals established for their child in the individual educational plan.

GOAL

The school directly involves parents in the education of their young handicapped child.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.71.030, page 6

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Parents should experience the ARD meeting as a cooperative effort conducive to a positive impression of the early childhood program.
2. Schools should arrange for parents to visit the assigned classroom before the child is admitted so that they will be familiar with the setting.
3. Parents and teachers should work together to identify learning objectives for the child.
4. Districts should encourage the involvement of parents in classroom activities. Parents can be very effective in assisting the teacher or aide on a regularly scheduled basis with activities such as preparing classroom materials, conducting an interest center, and/or coordinating field trip experiences.

5. Parent group meetings should be held regularly and preferably in the evenings for the benefit of working parents.
6. Teachers should contact parents individually and frequently regarding their child's positive accomplishments and progress as well as the areas in which he/she needs improvement.

SERVICE COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

It is the responsibility of the schools and the regional education service centers to implement and maintain a system for identifying and coordinating services which are beneficial to handicapped students. The system should provide for cooperation and communication among all levels of public education, other units of state government, nonpublic schools, and other institutions or agencies serving handicapped students.

GOAL

The school coordinates services for the benefit of the handicapped child.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.73.060, page 92; Section 35.75.060, pages 113-114

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Each school district, regional education service center, and special education cooperative should have a plan that assures coordination with existing agencies and facilities. The plan should provide for more effective and comprehensive services for the handicapped and should ensure that no students are excluded because of division of responsibility.
2. The service coordination plan includes the following:
   a. A list of resources available to serve handicapped students;
   b. Procedures for obtaining services from each agency;
   c. Procedures for effective communication among agencies; and
   d. Involvement of other agencies in regard to student placement in special education.

EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

Program evaluation is the procedure whereby a school district collects and organizes information for the purpose of analyzing and consequently maintaining and/or improving the program's effectiveness.

GOAL

The school provides minimum annual evaluation of the early childhood program.

AUTHORITY REFERENCE

Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students, ADO 871 01, Section 35.71.040, pages 8-9.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Schools should select or develop evaluation instruments according to their program's philosophy, goals, and objectives.
2. The evaluation should be conducted annually and should include the program philosophy, administrative management procedures, budget management, personnel, student progress, curriculum, materials and equipment, and the parent involvement program.
3. The evaluation process should involve a variety of personnel. Individuals responsible for the supervision, program implementation, and provision of related services should be active team members. Parental involvement in the evaluation of student performance and program success should be encouraged.
4. An outside evaluation by community service providers and others who may be interested in the effectiveness of the early childhood program is

desirable. A suggested time line for program evaluation conducted by individuals outside of the school district is once every three years.

5. The information obtained from the evaluation process should be compiled, analyzed, and an evaluation report including recommendations should be prepared based on the evaluation results. All evaluation materials should be filed for documentation purposes.
6. Program revisions resulting from the evaluation should increase program effectiveness and lead toward improved student performance. Revisions should also be in compliance with federal and state policies, procedures, and regulations.
7. Early childhood programs that are contracted for instructional or related services with other service providers must evaluate the effectiveness of contract services on an annual basis. Documentation of the evaluation must be maintained for monitoring purposes.